

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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FM USINT HAVANA

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INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

AMEMBASSY LIMA

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L HAVANA 1985

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDEV MILI CO PE CU

SUBJ: CASTRO ON RELATIONS WITH COLOMBIA/PERU

1. COLOMBIAN AMBASSADOR CLARA NIETO GAVE US BRIEF RUNDOWN, JULY 11, OF FIDEL CASTRO'S JULY 5 CONVERSATION WITH COLOMBIAN MINISTER OF EDUCATION RAFAEL RIVAS POSADA. (FYI RIVAS REPORTEDLY IS HIGHEST-RANKING COLOMBIAN OFFICIAL EVER TO VISIT CUBA. HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY DORIS EDER, VICE-MINISTER OF EDUCATION, EMILIO ALJURE, DEAN OF NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, AND ERNESTO ZAMBRANO, DEAN OF MEDICINE OF UNIVERSIDAD DEL VALLE. FELIPE LOPEZ CABALLERO, SON OF OUTGOING PRESIDENT LOPEZ MICHELSON, WAS ALSO NOTED AT LATER COLOMBIAN EMBASSY RECEIPTION, AS WAS ON MAURICIO LOPEZ-POSSIBLY A COUSIN OF FLEIPE. END FYI.)

2. CASTRO TOLD COLOMBIANS THAT THEY (THE COLOMBIANS) ARE "IN RELATIVELY BETTER CONDITIONS" THAN REST OF LATIN AMERICA. HE EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH TURBAY ELECTION, BUT APPARENTLY DID NOT, DURING RIVAS MEETING, INVITE INCOMING PRESIDENT
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TO CUBA. (COMMENT: WE UNDERSTAND FROM COLOMBIAN AMBASSADOR THAT TURBAY, DURING ELECTION CAMPAIGN, EXPRESSED INTEREST IN VISITING CUBA.) CASTRO EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH CUBAN RELATIONS WITH COLOMBIA, AND NEITHER SIDE BROUGHT UP PROBLEM OF COLOMBIAN GUERRILLAS/BANDITS. (COMMENT: INTERESTINGLY ENOUGH, CASTRO'S THIRD WORLD ADVISOR OSMANY CIENFUEGOS, PAST PARTICIPANT IN CUBAN GUERRILLA TRAINING EFFORTS, PARTICI-

PATED IN MEETING WITH COMOMBIANS. TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, CIENFUEGOS HAS NEVER PARTICIPATED IN ANY OTHER RECENT MEETINGS WITH LATIN AMERICANS.)

3. ON PERU, CASTRO REMARKED THAT CUBANS HAVE EVIDENCE THAT PERUVIAN NAVY DESTROYED CUBAN FISHING SHIPS IN CALLAO, BUT HE SAID THAT CUBANS HAVE NOT PRESSED ISSUE SINCE THEY DO NOT WANT TO UNRAVEL REMAINING COOPERATION BETWEEN PERU AND CUBA. (COMMENT: IN LIGHT OF CASTRO'S STATEMENT, IT IS INTERESTING THAT NEW ASSISTANT CUBAN DEFENSE ATTACHE IN LIMA IS NAVAL OFFICER.)

4. CASTRO SAID THAT CUBA'S RELATIONS WITH VENEZUELA ARE SATISFACTORY. HE MADE NO UNUSUAL REMARKS ABOUT SOUTHERN CONE NATIONS, DID NOT MENTION BELIZE PROBLEM, AND MADE NO OTHER SIGNIFICANT COMMENTS ON LATIN AMERICA.

5. ON AFRICA-RELATED MATTERS, CASTRO MENTIONED THAT CUBA WAS SELF-ASSURED AND WOULD NOT RESPOND TO OUTSIDE PRESSURES. IN THIS CONTEXT, HE SPONTANEOUSLY BROUGHT UP POSSIBILITY THAT CANADA AND SWEDEN WOULD TERMINATE AID PROGRAMS FOR CUBA AND SAID THAT THESE KIND OF ACTIONS DO NOT HURT CUBA AND WOULD NOT CAUSE HAVANA TO ALTER ITS POLICY COURSE. (COMMENT: CASTRO'S UNSOLICITED RAISING OF POSSIBILITY OF TERMINATION OF CANADIAN AND SWEDISH AID PROGRAMS INDICATE THAT CUBAN LEADER IS BECOMING HYPERSENSITIVE TO CONFIDENTIAL

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FOREIGN REACTIONS TO HIS AFRICAN ADVENTURES. CURRENT CUBAN DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO COUNTER POSSIBLE HOSTILE CRITICISM AT KHARTOUM OAU AND BELGRADE NON-ALIGNED MEETINGS PRESUMABLY ARE REFLECTIVE OF GENUINE CONCERN AND BELIE CASTRO' EXPRESSIONS OF SELF-CONFIDENCE WHILE CASTRO IS CORRECT THAT ECONOMIC IMPACT OF POSSIBLE AID PROGRAM DECISIONS IS MINIMAL, HE MAY BE PREOCCUPIED THAT OTHER RELATIVELY NEUTRAL STATES WILL CEASE COLLABORATING WITH CUBA AND THEREBY RETURN HAVANA TO STATE OF POLITICAL ISOLATION FROM WHICH IT EMERGED WITH GREAT DIFFICULTY IN LAST DECADE.)

6. AMBASSADOR NIETO SAID THAT EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE PACT CONCLUDED DURING RIVAS' VISIT WOULD NOT BRING ANY DRAMATIC CHANGES. SHE SAID THAT EXCHANGE WOULD PRIMARILY INVOLVE LIMITED STAYS BY EDUCATIONAL PROFESSIONALS IN EACH COUNTRY. NO EXCHANGE OF STUDENTS OR TEACHERS IS CURRENTLY ENVISAGED. AMBASSADOR NIETO INDICATED THAT COLOMBIANS ARE CONSIDERING COMMERCIAL PACT WITH CUBA, BUT DEFINITIVE DECISIONS WILL HAVE TO AWAIT INAUGURATION OF NEW ADMINISTRATION. LANE

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